



particulars

Tom Corrado

again, for you . . .

*Do thou stand for my father, and examine me
upon the particulars of my life.*

- William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I, Act II, Scene 4*

Out among the stars testing your balance
swaying, cheating ... the cut-to-the-bone precision
of the crow's flight ... Icarus in the cockpit ...
you practice a disciplined indifference
trying hard to seem not to be trying too hard
plagiarizing Seduction Theory
eyes on angularities
racking up odysseyites for a casual game of nine-ball
in the diamond formation on the subway
where it's all tag-team fashion show
for the clock's hand-wringing ...
Trying to stay awake amid the blizzard of YouTubes
you reach back for the metric of then ...
bundles of literary allusions
misquoted misspelled misplaced
in the rare book section of the museum ...
spending nights alone in a dark room
teaching yourself to draw as if blindfolded ...
learning to unlearn ...
the fascination when the game is afoot ...
You leave the gallery and long-limbed bronzes
with gaps for reconciliation
by people filing in ... as what? ...
let's call them inadvertents ...
visiting the exhibition retrospectively,
following Zoomed corridors
through an opening in the text
and into the next scene
with customers at the counter in a diner
rewritten while obsessing the commonplace
with thoughts of odysseyites
going round and round the roundabout
in your old neighborhood
resonating with the rhythmic beat
of a blacksmith's hammer on an anvil
shaping steel red-hot from the fire
as if it were planned ...
as if it were the answer to the blue question
glued to the ATM ... empty, unused
on a one-way street

informing each and every touch of the day ...
You recount how touch initiates the sense of *I* ...
how it costumes the body on misty mornings
and waits at the bus stop
for passengers to resume their lives ...
A test email breaks the silence ...
The number of people
passing through the portal increases ...
And so it begins ... parsing the engagement
with you in the soup aisle at the supermarket
swiping your phone for texts,
checking the message
you took great care to get just right,
elbowing through inundations
within the wearisome, spinning orb,
harvesting the future for meaning
while standing at the edge of a cliff
for however long ...
You're grappling so as not to forget
what you want to remember ... a whoosh
as if the surf crashes the cliff
with you floating above ...
You have decided to practice narrowing your focus
to eliminate the superfluous from your walks ...
the day, deftly unraveling,
seems almost to disappear ... so many thoughts
vying for your attention ...
then this idea of the texture of it all ...
everything everyone seemingly connected
with tabs for those nestled
in the cleft of your memory ...
Again, asking yourself in the mirror
What good would questions do? ...
the silence between extremes
leaving the madness of March
with index finger pointing to ring finger ...
You buy time ... walking through replays
that slam dunk you awake
in the middle of yet another dream
of being called out for texting plagiarisms ...

You're thinking of taking the day off ...
wanting to call in sick
when sick has nothing to do with it ...
besides there's no one to call in to ...
You should know this by now ...
You should know that the gallerist
reviewing your work has run out of excuses
trying to make something to find out
what it means to make something ...
An afternoon class in Classics
changes the way you approach texts
while the gravel trail bloats
big cats on fat bikes
waiting to find out what it all means
beginning with *Shall we begin?*
as we begin Frances O'Connor's *Emily*
with more isms to latch onto
sprung from the sibs' paracosms
to embellish the autofictions of those
in the boarded-up storefronts of no-no
disputing the biopic tag
with sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll
and a downplay of collaboration
ignoring Emily's diary paper ...
And behind the embellishments
The facts in the case of ...
You walk the walk for more words
using the *Index of First Lines*
to guide googling
only to return
cache full of purple waywardisms
as if you had trod the moors ...
Then on to the myth, hands in pockets
parlaying passcodes at transfer stations
to level the playing field
for odysseyites bused to the soundstage ...
But there was more to it than the translation
skirting the main event
while asking the resident Sphinx
the passcode to some inner chamber

where alternatives are kept on ice with Facebookers
posting the past despite the plethora
of contemporary adaptations
of your take on *Beowulf* ...
those damaged destined to repeat their obsessions
tumbling head over heels into roundabouts ...
A treatise on the importance
of getting your house in order
targets hoarders making the mess messier ...
This longing for one last shot at immortality ...
a day in the life of a day in the life ...
everything volumizing a high wire act
with no less than how to get through the day ...
The vigilance you signed up for, yes? ...
Can you imagine this ancient hatch? ...
This escapade of hopscotch fueling the voices in the air
that today argue happenstance ...
the lone and level sands
stretching to a wooden-legged captain
awaiting a white whale? ...
Nonsense lapses into feigned forgetfulness
dumping you in the middle of nowhere ...
second guesses segue to pastoral settings
upstate with stemmed glass bumped
to the edge of tomorrow as Georgian models
infiltrate your REM sleep ...
There's a history, of course, going back to the City
where who knows what happened ...
the loss temporary ... weighing the pluses and minuses
of your next move ... memories of tagalongs
bloating the escape route ... conflating the statistics
while all along, in the cards, the Shirelles
with Number One on *Billboard's Top 100 Chart*
for 1960: *Will You Love Me Tomorrow?* ...
Irrevocability pins you to the mat
to wrangle seconds ... or thirds ...
as if messaging with footnotes
a sarabande by Yo-Yo Ma ...
Why bother sweating the opening bars
with the prelude bleeding through the score

inflicted by a little-known?...
You're regressing faster than the speed of sound
to when you auditioned for intimacy's promises
and were thrown for an infinite loop
by odysseyites reopening the book
to the chapter you slammed shut...
A well-known misstep, yes?...
Losing your place in line at a tag team lawn party
the moment-to-moment gazes
the moment-to-moment costumes...
The iffy-ness... especially the embellishments
highlighting the timetable of your life...
where you are... and why...
The accumulation of happenstance... scripted...
does little to quell the offhandedness...
The offhanded notations of old money...
of old and new money...
Consulting a flowchart for next steps...
But is it enough?...
A long hauler paging through the elements
and with that, the scene shifts,
summoning a fact-checker
to fact-check the epigraph on tippy-toes
when all seemed taken by the virtual bridge
you had conjured the morning after...
Where were you on the night in question?
You seem never to tire of that...
Approaching it as if this is it
as if this time is it
as if toggling the options...
The events in the just-released transcript
by the just-released
who had long been forgotten by most...
But that was long ago
to say nothing of your selfish devotion to your art...
And then this happened
with the weird-ass energy of the woebegone
and you bejeweled with scrimshaws
sitting among the antique furniture in the atelier
blue-penciling diatribes...

Was there no other way? ...
What was that anyway? ...
The dynamics of engagement, perhaps? ...
The regrettable choices? ...
The nomenclature of streaming seems to have caught on
as a contender for an individual's legacy
revealing the contents of the steamer trunk
hidden in the attic
having been asked on Facebook chat
What's important? ...
Weathering love's inconsistencies
you may want to consider the language
of divinity schools where shades of gray
are Wac-A-Moled into submission
to the delight of those on the wait list ...
Content providers are providing content
for weekend do-it-yourselfers ...
Why did you walk off the set? ...
The troubling aftermath of parsing the logic
long listed drip-dried up and out ...
into and out of the tropes
clutching the elusive, the untranslatable ...
chopping and framing the sum of its parts
to evoke the essence of absence ...
You're drowning in word soup and loving it ...
backstroking to *Nothing Compares 2 U*
while down-time and emptiness haunt the backstory ...
Wouldn't you rather smirk the passcode
reminiscing short stacks in the greasy spoon
of one of your past lives
when odysseyites stood on their heads
and busied themselves
assembling paraphernalia
for your next expedition
into a supermarket's labyrinthine aisles? ...
Rehearsing lines for detox where talk-talk is restrung
with unwords for transposition ...
rearranging the furniture of the mind
to extract the right answer
by rewording the question ...

Of course, the drama of the get-go
with the feel of a silent movie ...
eyes darting around the corners of the room
as if a mouse had sped past
slamming down chunks of cheddar
trailed by a reconfigured tabby ...
The flattish physiognomy of the perp
under the cold, bleary sheets of confusion
opens the key to eventual deformity ...
To hear the little click
for another season of reruns is OK ...
even par for some of the players chomping
to borrow a phrase
for when the lake freezes over
with you dotting the horizon
in yet another rewrite
of your one wild and precious life
bought and sold by plagiarists
shoplifting future episodes for junkyard flâneur
in search of thought bubbles
floating above orphaned backstreets ...
You thought you had the journey all mapped out
dividing days
into passionate melodrama or befuddlement ...
napping in transit as resident fashionista ...
Ubers and Lyft's at your beck and call ...
Upgrading short stacks from a *Dance Macabre* ...
odysseyites promenading with corpses
along the boulevard
only to be messaged *stack overflow* ...
That you decided at that point to shuffle the sequence
ballooned the palatability
to the delight of standins ...
You could have danced all night ... and you did ...
Wait, there's more ... it'll come to me ...
that elusive construct that opens a dialogue
and you're off and running
with depositions about the hazards of following suit ...
I know you know what I mean
having been interrogated again and again

about the meaning of meaning ...
You said as much in discovery
and now you're living in a yurt
with midnight puppets
editing autofictions with invisible ink ...
mirror images reflecting after-hour hookups ...
It's not so much the tabbing ... but flipping out
over the admittedly loose adaptation
of a fragmented backstory ...
And this was elsewhere, yes? ...
The provocativeness of close reading triggers
a memory that will prove your undoing ...
Still, it's a wonderful life, yes? ...
Clouds retreat in joy to the core of a volcano
on a remote island in a sea of forget-me-nots ...
A sidelong glance from before glimmers ...
You, in the moment, spend the rest of your allotment
running lines from award-winning one-acts
hoping, if nothing else, for a takeaway ...
You draw a line as if the why is adrift
in a soon-to-be-predicted snowstorm
when incomplete sentences flurry
and you, jacketed against the cold,
attempt a semblance of sanity
while talking heads feel compelled to cosplay ...
The moment-to-moment touch and go diminishes
especially now with crumpled scripts
cluttering the gazebo
where an Anthony Hopkins' lookalike
walks you through the proof with:
Let X equal the cold ...
In real life, it's not that simple ...
In real life, it takes a long time to break the ice ...
the entire ordeal offputting ...
You worry tragedians ...
You confirm the faces comprising your past selves
which your therapist, confusingly, demurs ...
Yet, a brisk walk awaits ... so you leave, quoting Woolf:
If a writer were free, there would be no plot ...
Your past lives gather in a room

filled with familiars ...
You're dumbfounded ... speechless ...
standing outside in knee-high grass ...
green and metronomic ...
An upright bass player
on loan from the produce section
of the food co-op
runs changes over the retractions
you're riffing ... prompting you
to peel a dead language
from the interim speaker of the House of Crazy
who casts his die midstream and arrives at a reception
where the scene unfolds with blank stares ...
Your mother's eyes redact the script ...
A director calls for softer thought bubbles ...
The move trips a flushed response
hurling the entire cast
into the bowels of a banned book ...
You want this hot early fall day to be enough
but it is not ...
With irrevocability looming, how can you be sure? ...
Unlocking the tee-time, OK, I get it,
but let's face it, it's nothing,
days pummeled with coffee and Danish ...
No one in the know ...
No other way ...
The joint had to have been bugged, yes? ...
Subjects flashing tenure, mashed with newsprint ...
Opening statements ... gappy, medieval references ...
The room in stitches ...
Talking heads ... He walked! ...
despite the fact they had chauffeured the angry twelve
in an unmarked vehicle, windows blackened ...
Yup, closed-mouthed
for the rest of the show, they were ...
It was positively 4th Street, or maybe 5th, I forget ...
Your spectrum of entanglements
continues to tickle comings and goings
Roman numerals stacked
fleeing into an anxious canyon

of choral meanderings
memories flooding the stairwell
evoked by the tracks on your mixtape ...
You're checking out playlists
trying to throw light on the passage of time ...
fragmentary dreamscapes draw you in ...
You've been tagged for a workgroup ...
the behind-the-scenes incidence of intimacy ...
It happens, yes? ...
The days into weeks into months into years ...
grasping at fillers to avert the inevitable? ...
Sitting there, smiling,
your tongue unleashed from its moorings ...
unctuous in its wake ...
as if regression took the wheel from some roadie
when, at the last misstep, you decide to stay a while ...
Your younger self on a dirt bike pulls up to a light
and the cameras roll into the next decade
with ins and outs
tumbling through the paper drifts of assignments ...
That was when you repainted your room
with your altered ego
leaving a memory of special effects in a milk truck
before dawn's early light ...
The cavalcade of costumes
was well worth the tag team takedown
when eyes wide shut for unknown reasons
stepped in from another season of reruns ...
The confusion addictive
but then we were all in the mix of *Mother Jones* ...
the Dickinsonian obliquesness
conducive to auditioning for different roles ...
a shoo-in for this and that ... this and that ...
And you in the ungraspable somewhere
flopping down on a couch
grabbing the remote
channel-surfing
leaping intuitively to the ending you must have ...
these mere players playing their parts
their table-reads off the grid

between the lines
improvisational
winging-it
flying by the seat of their pants
scenes colliding, mounting to confusion ...
The moment to moment ...
Drafting the incense of homecoming
as you follow the directions ...
the rights and lefts
climb the stairs, review your notes
one last time before entering ...
Is this why you rise early
brimming with alterations? ...
Little matter ... no one will be duped ...
Nothing incidental here
in the foundry of stamped emotion ...
You can examine it, dissect it, take it for a walk ...
without recrimination ... without regret ...
leaving indelible - and very real - turnabouts
for those who feel nothing about feeling nothing ...
Blue-lined notebooks fat with FAQs
sideswipe with indifference ...
You deconstruct backstreets
and hang out at a kiosk,
the one with BOGOs of pics
of your former selves -
some then ... some now -
sorting through fragments
of what might have been ...
the read-through pristine yet unconvincing
as if bell lappers knew all along
your retreat into the backdrop ...
There will be additions
which you will fail to anticipate ...
gorging yourself on hasbeens ...
captivating onlookers with pretense
your costume re-engaging the opening masterfully ...
You worry you're spending too much time
within the mirror in the mirror
memeing Proust's madeleines ...

burned-out AI memory chips
spewing the anger and anguish
of living in The House of Crazy ...
You're trying to capture the colors of the 13 moons
but the composition bullies down
the Rothkovian palette ...
You decide True Blue will do
knowing Michelangelo bailed on *The Entombment*
because he couldn't afford ultramarine ...
its extraction and production so prohibitive
that the semiprecious color was restricted
to the Christ and the Virgin Mary ...
You fear the clock's relentless ticking ...
Will you return now to the easel with snow forecast? ...
Will your image remain long enough to be captured? ...
Your dream sounds a diminished seventh
in a wine-soaked gritty eatery
with you wearing your want in bib-overalls
inventorying the dissonant conversations
that once filled the long, narrow, high-ceilinged
hallway to nowhere ...
A chance encounter, the makeshift profile
a deluge of lines that grows tired
as you excuse yourself
onto a parallel stage
colored with red collared Maine Coons
big enough to intimidate ... a perfect fit
for your inscrutable autofiction ...
How often did standins speak their tongue? ...
anticipation flooding their ludicrous logic ...
a takedown by a passing mathematician
whose game theory panoply just out in paperback
leapfrogged to the top of some obscure list
of academic best sellers ...
That the magicians left
is a rain-soaked late December morning
in a glut of jaundiced checkmates ...
Your late night posturing
has opened a cabinet of Caligari moments
flooding a willingness

to split the session for odysseyites
miming on a gessoed stage ...
The world will begin again
and again
with contemplatives appending
for appending's sake
while you, delightfully costumed,
will be seen through the half-inch
of a window left open
by one of your entourage
moving seductively to Mahler's *Fifth* ...
You've misplaced the opening scene
where you in silhouette
disappear into an apartment building
in a late-night snow storm ...
Inside the vacant apartment
miniature glass slippers
arranged paradoxically
speak to you extemporaneously ...
You entertain the notion
of a dentist's appointment
for a loose crown ...
or an afternoon feeding the bears
that wander onto the grassy knoll
looking for evidence ...
Nothing can be done about this ...
Nothing should be done about this ...
The light will change
but isn't that usually the case
especially when ordering takeout? ...
The mesmerization of the airbnb ... a loophole
to magic your audience into hypnotic submission ...
scripting the maelstrom of your wiles
with alternative mysteries
leading to the decreation of egocentrics
who are left to wander the empty boulevards
of Walmart Supercenters ...
Your promiscuity alchemical ... its weird threads
seducing those on the edge of aftermaths
feeding an inner mindscape yet to be embraced ...

As if using a prepared piano
you explore the fringe between music and noise
experiencing emotions
as you write about them ...
Is that something you even think about?...
Meaning?...
Cavorting with unbearables?...
Not sure ...
but there always seems to be less to go on
especially when films echo the wavelengths of the lost
sitting with ferals napping on stoops ...
Confronting silence with veiled undertones?...
Interpreted as joy?...
It's the presence, yes?...
That's it ... the presence ...
Questioning the call of odysseyites
inserting pronouns to enhance palatability ...
But didn't you say you were confused
by the struggle to make it all fit
into a nice little takeaway?...
OK, maybe elsewhere ...
Forget the trends ... rampant on the boulevards ...
There's more to it than that ...
the pounding at the back door, for example,
or the voided wishes of inoccupants
in dilapidated storefronts ...
It's probably worth the bother ...
besides we all know you enjoy winging it
with the monochromatic subtones
of early morning drivebys ...
Having discarded the template-a-minute app
as an unbearable lightness
confused by impersonators
you engage the drudgery of filling in the slots
while polishing stones from a not-so-hidden cache ...
Altogether now with meaning, yes?...
You're drifting off-course ...
the day's minutia fogging the lens
to say nothing of wannabes warming up ...
The little green room is plantless ...

an amalgam of exchange
without dawn's pristine view
reaching back for a foothold
or facsimile
which in time will revisit this memory ...
This is not without precedent
but the moment-to-moment displacement
is hard to accept ... let alone confront ...
Your call-ins have been duly noted ... and archived ...
You're shadowing Kafka ... with pointe shoes
spinning ... spiraling ...
into the tremendous world
inside his head
then it's on to the drone
with the speed of a grizzly
but not whose woods these are ...
the plaintiff continuing despite admonitions
with someone alleging misappropriation ...
Again, the unbearable whiteness
before the conductor
raises her baton to begin
reeling-in the orchestra
letting them know
where she wants them to go
giving the impression
they're behind the beat ...
But they know ... yes, they know ...
not unlike the time you waded into the water ...
baptismally, perhaps? ...
quoting Gilgamesh
the unbearable heaviness ...
the emptiness of the endgame ... moving ...
wait, not moving, no longer ...
A matinee ... but not ...
flip it ... to a rendering of the terrain ...
You're riding the shapes of the books you have read ...
the geometry of stories
etymological underpins
backstories
late night walks - real and imagined ...

Self-mythologizing life's path or paths
however logical or reverential
may seem, if pressed against a whiteboard,
a mapping of your encounters
etched from bootleg tapes
whose words fill thought bubbles
alphabetizing utterances
from the street, the media, internet feeds ...
It's not just that though is it? ...
But what of hopscotching
the ongoingness of paradox? ...
A trifle? ... the intoxicating trance? ...
the blindness of happiness? ... I mean
you seem to be coming into the country of the end game
as it is, or better, as it will be ... an alternate stage
upon which you can enact or re-enact your part ...
Fat Tuesday kicks off a super bowl of Cajun gumbo ...
Cybersecurity mavens schedule colonoscopies
with iCloud colorways
as if keyboarding members of the alphabet
to guide a 20-wheeler through the woods of words
would be enough to maintain a daily stepcount of 10,000
for a buy-back from the gods of uncertainty ...
Repurposing confidential information next to a dogbed
is a bullet train back to the future
where rehearsals are more rehearsals
and the game afoot raises the stakes
to a sub two-hour marathon
fixed on the window of a Magic 8 Ball ...
The drama resurfaces in water under the bridge
quenching no one's thirst ... with you
leaving the table of random numbers without a word
without finishing the song ... driving away
into sheets of sound ...
You're collapsing the story ... but why? ...
Why this segue into alienation
with voices at the back door? ...
No, not gallows humor, not just yet ...
You have come too far to fear the end ...
of course, it's all about coming

at the drama from a distance
all stops pulled out
the perspective just that
and, what, you're trying to reel it in?...
You do recall the reshoot
after several lines had been cut
leaving you at loose ends, yes?...
a kind of detachment
even about the most intimate of details
fanning out like a stacked deck of cards
with the magician asking you to pick one...
There's more to it, sure, but let's not, not now...
You're turning the room inside out
looking for the missing link
you forgot to include in your email...
Rhode Island Reds cluck news feeds...
the regulated symbol in art
smearing your dreamscape lakeside
with the cinematography grammatical
to showcase your outré demeanor...
It's nothing... really, this imagining
as if one were willing to retreat
to a safer pop-up monastically...
even with everything curated, yes?...
Thinking a reshoot of the end game
is one way to pass this late season snowstorm...
The hiking paths wait...
This pincushiony dynamic is offputting
to say the least... it can't help but raise a flag
to the 365 days of summer...
It's something to think about, I suppose,
especially when considering footwear
and the miles and lines to be traversed...
I hate to remind you but those cyberdays
keep coming back, their moves color-coded
for easy turnstiling... and more...
Flat screens are a turn on...
Reminds me of Miles cranking out however many hits
to fulfill his contract and join Columbia...
Lately you've been lapse... and why is that?...

The intricacies of intimacy
with you elsewhere retooling your philosophy ...
Nietzsche's *We have art so we don't die of reality?* ...
Is that it? ... OK, I'll play along
with the casual dress code
but now what? ... now you're complaining
because you're telling me
that complaining kickstarts creating
and isn't that what we're all about? ...
Like listening to someone's words
as if on the noisy soundstage of a silent film
or listening to a serial open mic reader
whose words supply a different narrative
every time someone texts
or listening to your own words
dress-coded for undertow with boxy takeaway ...
Illusory, perhaps? ...
Reupping with the help of an intimacy coach
should do it ...
The tiresome bobbing and weaving
obliterate the string of pearl days
basking in the unseasonable 50s ...
What you thought you heard
is what you heard ... at least according to hearsay ...
Emptying a bottle of invisible ink
to the Big Pharma of resolution
is an AI monologue composed
not from images but from words ...
Objections disallowed by dissonance, yes? ...
How can masterworks survive
in this forensic undercurrent? ...
A din drifts in from the back room
where pleas are bargained
before headlining virtual tabloids ...
Your lines risking enjambment
will doubtless make the six o'clock news ...
And now you're cutting and pasting ...
exiting through the gift shop
with Billie Eilish's *What Was I Made For?* ...
An uncertainty about how to live? ...

A turning like the turning of the seasons? ...
An image of a face from long ago
but the entanglement is like a train
leaving a station recalled
for a phrase rethought ...
Enough to cross the bridge
with street cred and sky-high interest rate ...
Not that you haven't been warned ...
It's the unremitting arrogance
of a violist da gamba stopping by woods
on a snowy evening quoting from
a remaindered copy of *How Should a Person Be?* ...
Your costume mishap is a trailer park
and the horses in Patti Smith's
debut studio album are having none of it ...
eating and drinking their shortlisted lives
in the orchard that went viral
while you studied your reflection
in a glass bead game not unlike Ahab's
He's dead but he beckons ...
And here comes everybody's electronic music
with Moby Melville ... his rhyming dictionary
off the grid he meant to Uber ...
Buybackers stream ... yet another example
of wardrobe anxiety from your out-and-about days
of celebrity passcodes ...
This will begin ... and this too will begin ...
dreamscapes overshadowing your vintage items ...
Regressing to some well-worn route
leading to a floor-through apartment
back-burnered with mirrored images ...
Nothing is ready for you ...
Nothing will be ready for you ...
Appointments are backed into double wides ...
This is not new ... consolation prizes
leak language barriers ... a throwback to the days
you shoplifted muffled noises
only to be disappointed by more days
of exceptions ... or expectations, whatever ...
You concede a strange bunch of circumstances

abutting a consolation of sorts
nothing to complain about ... yet
but someone's interior monologue is about to sound ...
It could be UPS
in the guise of medievalism or innuendo ...
You're tizzied over an early arrival ...
Try not to get hammered again ... there's no need ...
not that there ever was ...
at least according to the transcript ...
It could be just what the doctor ordered
not unlike when your development was muted
and you were on your clovenly way ...
You sport incompleteness at an archaeological dig
with Etruscan vases and dental instruments
playing the part with players playing root canals
costumed as shattered visages ...
The lone and level sands pull out into traffic ...
You disappear into a labyrinth of words
but manage to recite your way out
with *No coward soul is mine* by Emily Brontë
whose disregard for convention
makes for an enjoyable trek
across the Yorkshire moors of someone's dreamscape ...
A draft of a manuscript is being read aloud
by a voice from the air ...
Crows mock crows ...
You enter the scene idiosyncratically loose
in bib overalls and Mucks
approaching as if in the middle of a paper spree ...
An unshapely tuft of something begins ...
It's all about dreamscapes in Rothkoviean colorways ...
The mist ... as written, yes? ...
but why this consequence by an unknown? ...
I mean you could have just as easily engaged
with the cameras rolling ... as discussed ...
I'm not sure you're ready to apply the rules
of present tense ... when the color of time being
is finished anyway ... staying out beyond curfew ...
of course you remember that day
on the street when the rightful owner

emerged from a late-model SUV
and began interviewing you for the next installment...
This is where the metaphor gets a little screwy
with you playing the part...
whatever the part may be...
knowing that observing the inconspicuous
is your forte...
Let's start with an invisible person
sampling poutine at a diner...
They leave their cell phone at a bakery
with a baguette and stories to tell...
Are they a tourist?... Maybe later...
Cut to a lump of clay shape-shifting...
togglng the fourth wall as if a gift horse's mouth...
Are you OK with the vegetables in your garden?...
Let your family know...
This is important...
Family relationships are well worth
their autofictitious melodramas...
Think Tolstoy...
*Everyone thinks about changing the world
and no one thinks about changing themselves...*
How this came to this is well worth the time
it took for you to open the door
to an unknown sound...
A cellist in the woods works through
a Bach sarabande...
You're inventorying defining moments
trying to decide which one to include in your proposal
for grant money to mount your play
which you haven't begun to write, so you're like,
This may be a defining moment,
with feet entering the five and dime from your
childhood, drawn from a linebook
by the director of that over-the-top production
where everyone was fitted with a body double
to stand in when excitement paled,
but now with the defining moment head-butting,
you turn to no one and begin improvising
a selection of Beckettian anecdotes because,

just because, you're in the mood to name-drop ...
A Polaroid of young people at a beach
and the tale of the white Donald Duck tank suit
dripping with the full catastrophe begins ...
A return to the days of then
soundtracked by 45s
the carefree exchange of goods and services
Jerry's Long Strange Trip ...
high heels clicking on a 4 AM sidewalk
following an *n* of 2 or 3 or 4 ...
all legs and arms and hair and words
streams flooded with binge
when ... *fanfare, please* ... a bread truck
rolls onto the scene
with Henry Miller at the wheel
Can I give you a lift? ...
so you climb on
for yet another ride
costumes aplenty
experiences aplenty
memories aplenty ...
Regrets? ... A few ... You too? ...
La-di-da, la-di-da, la, la ... à la Annie Hall ...
years later ... an ice storm cometh ...
its outage an insult to the Age of Crocs ...
The world teeters on the edge
of Hawking's *uninhabitable* ...
yoked to this and that ... this and that ...
and your hand ... their hand ... a full house ...
You've become enamored of the invisible,
the mystery of entanglements ...
It's not so much the unknown,
it's the excitement
of being seduced by the moment,
the feeling of engagement, a shared journey ...
The sloop of your dreams, drifting ...
This performative feeling about writing ...
that it's not set in stone ...
that it's not closed down, not done ...
never done ... is good! ...

You wake to an openness ...
a blank page, an empty canvas ...
And, no, it's not too late
to resume the close reading of your autofiction ...
to experience deconstruction ...
A bookstore materializes long enough
for you to buy your book, which isn't for sale ...
Someone chimes in with *sequencing is arbitrary* ...
Where does that fit in? ...
Nothing wrong with being inquisitive ...
Better than being aggressive or defensive, yes? ...
The slippery slope of misinterpretation? ...
of misunderstanding? ...
The time left is now ...
your experimental film ... infinitely looped ...
You're taking a line for a walk
to capture the cherry blossoms along the River Styx ...
It's a day in someone's life, yes? ...
The someone who was promised this but given that ...
How unlikely ...
Then the excitement of the roles you took on
after the barman's Last Call
bloating your Little Black Book
with fingerprints from your 'tweens ...
You were dusted ... and sent home ...
Your Hokus make the unseen seen
with canned images from the produce section
of the neighborhood Hannaford ...
Plans to repair the fence
trampled by wolves in sheeps' clothing
en route to grandma's
await the results of COVID testing ...
The director of Netflix's *Ripley*
refuses to believe it ... or not ...
There once was a time ... you suppose ...
Recall the chef you went to high school with
deboning your salmon steak
while in an antechamber
a one-nighter riffed on a Fender? ...
You wanted so much for it to be ...

The deck is stacked but you know that ...
Veganism? ... OK, veganism ...
There's loneliness in acceptance, yes? ...
The time your pickup broke down
leaving you stranded in Nowhereland
only to be dropped off at a subway stop
staring at the third rail
as if onlookers refused the magic
of your harmless costume ...
And later at the bus stop
where rehearsals got out of hand
and the day became a graphic novel
in a strange tongue ...
You knew this but continued your renderings
rubbing your hands together between your legs as if ...
As if, what? ...
As if the director would call a reshoot? ...
Take a moment to close read your journal
then return to the diorama of your neighborhood ...
Forget inevitability ...
Your earlier self inhabits the body ...
A trolley on a back street searches for passengers
who were meant to be elsewhere ...
You'd better not hear me say that! ...
the weird aftertaste when you at least tried ...
then the green of a standin
asleep in the other room ...
Yes, perhaps the endgame
which if nothing else will stoke the confusion ...
Someone will be kicked to the curb
before the overflow is reckoned with
and rendered inconsequential ...
You began the conversation on a positive note ...
a concert A? ...
yes, that's it, you said, recognizing
the ramifications of a lost lyric
in the early morning, no, no, not that,
it wasn't that, I'm sure ...
It's not about making the cut
the call and response ... that sort of thing

reconfigured from audio files
dropped off at a transfer station ...
It's about a musical suite in a stand of pines ...
Can you imagine the confusion
of a left turn ... then another ... and another?...
Nervous motion, head jerks, tics, shouts ...
The sinister recording of happenstance
followed by a rewind, a retelling ...
You practice your lines in a two-way mirror
plagiarizing last night's notes
ghosts escaping into the semantic ether
balancing tongues
at least believing such
that this is the way you have learned
to manage the world ...
to manage *you* in the world ...
Something will come undone ...
You will then fondle happy moments
lip-syncing the middle of a chapter
from your childhood's diorama
carried along by the current ...
your grocery list sheepishly revealing the answer
to a question you have yet to ask ...
the neighborhood's scammed
as odysseyites fill their foreigners
with ancient myths ...
As if at one remove ... transcribing
the moment to moment with reverse innuendo ...
a reason for everything
a reason for the body
a reason for the body of the other ...
Squeezing through an eastern window
the process beginning years ago
adding language's decrepitude to the mix
of polishing a lens ... a lens to better see ...
To better see what?...
To better see anything ... everything ...
and look, there's even room for more ...
Do you expect the end as predicted?...
howling through a nor'easter

(kidding, but how about if it were)...
then struggling to get the words right ...
another backstory arriving on the 1:05
with conspicuous palettes to color whatever 'scapes
you have prepared a pitch for ...
Illusory at best, yes? ...
This freedom of treading the remains of the day
caressing costumes
pocketing smiles
not unlike a silent film
where the audience can see what the actors cannot ...
Gawking at the exhibit
within the resilience of a gift shop
an oasis ensconced in the rude ...
later mapping the yellow brick road
perhaps indefinitely
noting the binge of history
as a way to memorialize your having been here ...
convincing the watcher at the gate that your words
are suitcased and ready for a weekend getaway ...
You recall Anne Carson on swimming:
Smoothing out the strokes in water
filled with anxieties:
You can fail it with each stroke.
What does that mean, fail it? ...
The poet, John Ashbery, blocked, envisioned
three empty oblong boxes to fill with words ...
He dipped into *The Cloud of Unknowing* ...
You like this idea and decide to try it ...
filling a container with words
and whipping them into a poem ...
Finding your way in a forest of well-crafted similes ...
the rationales we muster ...
What are you talking about? ...
You know, to pass muster ...
But is it that easy? ...
No, not easy, there are huge holes ...
yes, holes, that could trip you up
so that you'd have to start over again ...
Sisyphean ...

especially now, with the final station
coming into view ...
Nonetheless, ...
The neighborhood Carl Jung
behind the wheel of a red Ferrari
slam dunks the shyness
that smacks you back
to the darkness of OCD ...
cruising your bimonthly talking cure
filled with nightscapes
of lion-obsessed Venetian iconographies
the size of Rhode Island ...
You do enjoy these costumey affairs
collecting your unconscious
with pretend puddings
and freedom from counting syllables ...
The theater of limitations
is always open ... with words
arranged salon-style from floor to ceiling ...
The sound of paint applied to a surface
wants to tell you something ...
Tomorrow oscillates in the beauty we seek ...
As if the movie was afraid ...
so in the first episode
this face ... and you're thinking
take this face through the whole movie
but nope, you're tossed into a dark room
writing over your writing
because you can't see ...
words like dictation
the rain in Spain gives you wet brain ...
Now you're worrying about remembering
to google unclogging a drain ...
It's like that
the obliqueness
trying to fit it all into some designated,
predetermined framework ...
The delusion of illusion, yes? ...
and you're riffing on the responsibility
of the artist not to look away ...

to render what to you is real ...
 But it's late, really late
 for these visitors ... these night stalkers
 too late to be assailed
 by the critic at the gate ...
 Too many weary heads
 dislocating too many weary shoulders ...
 You were shrunk by a shrink in a pop-up
 during a blow-out BOGO sale
 words flying off shelves
 into Dharma bowls
 prepped by line cooks for enlightenment ...
 presentation is everything, yes? ...
 There was a time ... I mean ...
 I'm not sure what I mean ...
 without the script, perhaps? ...
 walking Commercial Street
 past Mary Oliver's ghost
 sitting outside her oceanfront cottage
 then on to the other end
 Stanley Kunitz's tiered garden
snakes dangling head-down, entwined
in a brazen love-knot ...
 the tide lapping the Provincetown Inn
 with memories of The Moors ...
 more than a bit raffish ...
 presided over by Scooter, the pet owl ...
 There is no other life ...
 Gary Snyder's homage
 to log truck drivers:
In the high seat, before-dawn dark,
Polished hubs gleam
And the shiny diesel stack
warms and flutters
Up the Tyler Road grade
To the logging on Poorman creek.
Thirty miles of dust.
There is no other life ...
 This to be archived for odysseyites
 in a reconfigured deconsecrated chapel

near Portofino, Italy ...
Augustine pockets pears and spills beans
in thirteen books
the self merely source material
a lost wax process
for the staging of bigger questions ...
Cezanne paints his apples
and rewrites the laws of perspective ...
logorrhea is a masturbatorially public act ...
The endeavor complicates ...
one word follows another
not as its sequel but as its unmaking ...
You distort ... intentionally ... unintentionally
and become enamored of your own engagement ...
your own autofiction ...
You roll out virtual howitzers
and execute reams of legal pads
hopscotching metaphors
on lines of macadam
awaiting wait staff for today's specials ...
How to make it so to seem doable
especially now with summer people
collecting shells of happiness
drifting offshore
in and out of doors and into whitewashed rooms
unencumbered by a mind of winter ...
You, like them, are shaped by resistance
tucking sheets ...
pulling them into neat corners
while the commute slows
dropping morning news anchors ...
You insist you can be more than a swinger of birches ...
You've had your fill of adult playpens
popping up in motion-sickness modules
of deconstructed shopping malls ...
The oppressive heat forces you to chill
in the supermarket's frozen food section
brimming with memoirists
collecting empties for eternity's sake ...
It's all part of someone's master plan ...

you're sure of it ... despite fashionistas
shadowing you with shoulda woulda couldas ...
The takeaways, yes, the takeaways, remain dicey ...
And why is that? ...
Surely the director allowed ample opportunity
for whatever directors allow ample opportunity for ...
Film Studies 101 is about to stream *The Turin Horse* ...
Do you think you're ready? ...
You worry language and drama-splicing ...
the abracadabra-ness of the day
as Walmartees stuffed with colorways
bottleneck roundabouts ...
It's summer ... waters are being tested ...
You've streamed the beaches
with an eye on binge-reading
the short stories in *The Canon*
beginning with John Cheever's *The Swimmer*
starring Burt Lancaster as Ned Merrill
in skin tight trunks
swimming across the county
in neighbors' pools
but it's fragmenting because Burt
is throttling a steam locomotive in *The Train*
which pit him as French Resistance-member Paul Labiche
against German Colonel Franz von Waldheim
played by Paul Scofield,
who is trying to move stolen art by train to Germany ...
In the final scene
von Waldheim stays with the derailed train
crammed with crates
labeled with the names of artists ...
Labiche appears ...
Von Waldheim mocks Labiche as artless ...
Labiche shoots von Waldheim ...
Percy Shelley and his wife Mary
a wild-eyed young redhead
backpack stuffed with *Frankenstein*
enter as if on cue ...
the lone and level sands stretching far away ...
You have a reputation for down time

for rearranging players and their parts ...
It's all there ... in your notebooks ...
on your (un)zip drive ...
It has become your mantra ...
Incomplete sentences ... written with crayons
follow in your wake ...
The manner in which they carry themselves
and the questions ... left unanswered ...
Trying to construct reality with Legos, yes? ...
You and your erotic other captured on tape
with sticky wickets ...
I never believed in falling prey to pews
but then again ... and again ...
Something is sure to befall one-nighters ...
Nights of reruns with brief, lost faces
feed the illusion of prediction
as if a magician's assistant living out of a suitcase
were cut in half ...
location ... location ... location ...
You as stopgap at the supermarket
comparing tongues with other sous chefs
squeezing into line for a virtual rollerama
of one-upmanship ...
sampling tidbits for a breakout special
enjambed with abandon
awaiting a redo of *The Breakfast of Champions* ...
The resident Kerouacian behind the deli counter
types a cemetery
on a roll of butcher paper ...
a makeover for aspirants outside the walls
carries you through a thicket of unknowns
with one-way tickets to elsewhere ...
The theatrics begin ... with words up ... words down
rehearsals ... do not pass Go ...
You know how it is
with everyone talking ... at the same time ...
It's tough to follow the storyline
if there is a storyline
but then some stories are better without a storyline ...
Just let the events unfold

in your pocket ... I don't care ...
little matter where ...
Whatever's convenient for you
I'm trying to wrap my head around something
that will get me through the next few hours
or the next few minutes ...
Escaping through the cracks in your argument
following bread crumbs to the Temple of Incidentals
restless long legs
parody of a back-flap biography
you fret over brands of black pepper
focus on the container ...
Stepping out onto the deck with eggs over easy, yes? ...
And coffee? ...
The seemingly insignificant? ...
There's nothing wrong with invisibility
and lemon juice ... held up to a light bulb
selecting from menu options
making do ... treading water ...
Come prepared to defend your thesis ...
You count out change from a shiny metal change counter
attached to your belt with Velcro ...
You score a merit badge for the likes of this ...
Isn't this romantic? ...
An aging-out squeezebox expands and contracts
to the gesticulations of bystanders ...
It's a day away from eBay ...
Forging ahead nonetheless
with less than Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels
you wait tables in reruns
buttdialing Ubers for Q&As
while running changes with after-hour noodlers ...
A good misstep
as innocuous as an up-close-and-personal ...
The subject has become the object ...
It happens whenever you click *Search* ...
igniting associations ...
The tendency to remain open
while people hover ... submitting requests ...
Are you ready to give it up? ... to give in? ...

Let's hope not ... at least not until
your fingers are ready
and the score is on the stands ...
Opening statements, please ...
What if we were to record every other word? ...
Would nonsense reign? ...
Would it become the New Now? ...
You were late ... with revisions ... only
to be called out ... for redundancy ...
You're charged with toggling the laugh track
while waiting in the checkout line
at the supermarket ...
The manager is a clown suit ...
A clown suit is a root canal sans Novocain ...
A clown suit is a box lunch ...
An after-the-fact afterthought ...
Your flight is taxiing
and now the ticket person in a clown suit
is telling you you're in the wrong line
but there's a million dollar smile
on a million dollar baby
in a million dollar condo
with a million dollar (*fill in the blank*) ____
Postcards from the corner office offer tips
on managing the parts of life that make no sense:
seductive five-star creamsicles
soundtracked by melodic lines
nursing pentatonic and catatonic scales ...
You pride yourself on inscrutable self-scrutiny
the examined life ... and all that
as if parroting fan-fiction of *The Canon*
makes dumbing down the default ...
So why the obsession with spoon-fed fork-tonguers? ...
The files ... sight-read
have been sealed ... and now
your raised hand is being co-dependently ignored ...
the almostness of your borderline personality
carrying on about the leaks in emptiness
that accompany Bruegger's Everything Bagels
and the duffel bags ... of risky narcissists

adorned with fidgety flight tags
from the Bucket's *100 Places to Visit Before Passing...*
Stay the merriment became your duly-noted mantra
even after your breaths exceeded the numbers
and you hop-scotched with bouquets of trillium
that happened by on their way
to yet another ho-hum commercial break
that... despite the menagerie...
always made you chuckle...
especially when Facebook friends
pointed to lapses in serving styles...
And you do believe yourself, yes?
This poem is a game of scrabble...
a game of babble
a game of mirrored sunglasses reflecting
a box of colored pencils... as you
thumb through Augusten Burroughs' *Dry*
inviting a tangle of lines leading to a fun house
in the middle of a re-enactment... as if
parallel parking a shopping cart were sufficient...
Again you argue the clock
with thoughts of a drybrush masterpiece
by Andrew Wyeth... at the Fenimore Museum...
Everyone deserves a break today...
Why today?...
Why today the blue vacuum with dry load
applied to a dry support
from your days
revitalizing sober living apartments?...
A one-size-fits-all transcription of experience
and your mind's ear takes a break today at Mickey D's -
generic, anti-confessional, without
the clawing happenstance of a Johnny Depp lookalike
backstroking in a sea of Elmer's Glue...
You continue to get antsy over dead zones...
Who doesn't?... but do we need two of anything?...
Attention-deficit mavens and their obsession
with the gap between fit and finish
transforming stage directions into librettos
puts one in the mood for a slice of pizza

with the works...
Isn't it time to resume the obligatory?...
Can you imagine?...
Not unlike the postmodern foisted upon minions
when no one was looking
and the brownout was force-fed...
And just when you thought it was safe
to go back in the water, yes?...
A discomfort has crept into the scene...
OK, but what's going to happen will happen, yes?...
Tell me, have you packed a picnic lunch?...
We hold our breaths as companions of the dying
and zoom in to color-code innuendoes
tabled from past table-reads...
There was a beginning
something bespoke as is so often the case
in this word-flurried world
with dwellings conjured from sand...
You're about to reserve your spot in the moment
which will proceed as these moments typically do
approaching a fork... and then?...
You're three-quarters in, more like four-fifths...
the fit and finish
of many years of off-and-on attempts
at involvement, at engagement...
The files in your folder labeled *fodder*...
encryption, hybridity, binaries...
Think devolution... if you want to spiral...
and please don't bring up the failed-essay deal
as if you default aspire to fragmentation...
If only counters zeroed-out
maybe you wouldn't...
Wouldn't what?...
There will be no retrospection today...
or tomorrow...
That was then, yes?...
Try the trip-wire
re-creating or recreating the page
with clips from a different genre...
Which is?...

You know, prose poems
mimicking oral storytelling ...
Yes, and so begins the mismatch:
a minute ago you were 25 ...
and now? ...
I suppose preponderance ...
That makes no sense ...
And here comes Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares* ...
That neither ...
OK, how about *to the manner born*
with yourself inside yourself
filling notebooks
using the *Leonardo Encryption App*
day in day out ...
Mind-boggling show and tells
puppy-like on makeshift silent-screen backlots
sometimes among headstones
to make the most of rubbings ...
The sacred geometry of chance ...
Then elapsation ... and you're elsewhere
jabbering for roles that highlight
your good-to-the-last-drop selfies ...
If only the timer ...
Photoshopped, perhaps? ...
But that's not the shape of your heart, yes? ...
What matters is no longer a matter ...
up and out with tail no longer bushy ...
A necromancer materializes
to choreograph a dance with realignment
and proprioception for flagging élans vital ...
Disparate marks quotes letters numbers ...
indifference spilling over onto the floor
and you're telling me about
the day's little tragedies ...
the interiority enlarged
squashing decouplings of moments
that were chosen to color the room
where someone is doing laps
in a claw-footed tub ...
On the far hill two castles ...

You're answering texts with your voice
carrying the irrelevancy in your canvas backpack ...
You worried pleather then opted for cerulean
which has nothing to do with the overdue landscape ...
It's OK, yes? ... hoping not to disrupt
the train of thought chuffing toward derailment ...
Circus wagons will be cleared in no time ...
Think puppets ... that always seems to work ...
Am I wrong? ...
Regardless, the late summer morning is happily
urging voices to sample the mélange ...
Soon, streets will be overrun with tourists ...
Again, a near miss ...
Days and nights ... days and nights
encounters in off hours
with translators of Ancient Greek
you and sleep parting ways
your self-portrait mirrored in a convex mirror ...
blindfolded, yet? ...
I mean, of course, until ... on the horizon ...
palms up ... weighing the air ...
anticipating departure ...
You sometimes worry in the middle of it
how they're faring ...
referencing Tolstoy on kindness
a segue to a conversation about why ...
Forget that ...
You want to haze transformations (OK, I get it!)
too excited too much too late ...
it seems to click in so nicely
you want to take this poem on vacation, yes? ...
Dylan's *Queen Jane Approximately*:
That you're tired of yourself
and all of your creations ...
and in the Summer of Love
Princess Summerfall Winterspring
confronts Phineas T. Bluster
about his untoward gestures
that back in the day of black and white
was tossed in a circular file ...

Someone's voice catches on the sound stage
and *The Man With A Thousand Faces*
appears at the organ in the bowels
of Paris's *Palais Garnier Opera House*
with Christine awakening to a music box's combs:
I remember there was mist
Swirling mist upon a vast glassy lake
There were candles all around,
and on the lake there was a boat
And in the boat there was a man.
But now you're bottlenecked in a queue
for the computer at the library
with this CEO person gesturing to this IT person
and you know you've been drafted
into a focus group
with all the clowns you have commissioned
having died in battle or in vain
to rewrite the opening scene to *The Turin Horse*
because Sea Shepherd lost the battle
against the whale hunters ...
with Facebook friends defusing the shiftiness
seeping into your daily bowl of organic oatmeal
affixing itself to that rare elegant lapse
in a small gallery on the third floor
where long-limbed bronzes
crowding the poorly-lit hallways
have pulled it off ... echoing Dylan's
and you're sick of all this repetition...
Won't you come see me, Queen Jane?...
as the train pulls out of the station
for the Guggenheim's posthumous exhibit
of On Kawara's *Silence...*
Across the Hudson ... Albany ...
Take for instance the still lifes
that stammer choices in cafés ...
the still lifes that could be amped-up
with nothing more than a toggle ...
The dealer has just cleared her hands
for the eye in the sky
while the pit boss pilots his skiff

toward the Burning Man ...
You're thumbing options ...
transcribing the title
of your final Golden Book ...
a Seussian mix of alleged allegory:
Oh, the Places You've Been ...
Encryption is key
with Beckett's *maybe* as failsafe, yes? ...
Without the venue it could flop
not that that would rewrite
the chorale but if you're placing
your bet on cacophony you'll appreciate
the metronomic meaning qua meaning ...
The backstory jumped bail, leaving you
with fragments and a breakout hit
in a car chase ...
Cosplaying ... again? ...
What do you mean you're not sure? ...
You know, I'm not sure, so I'm waffling ...
This is important ... the lines
as elements of style that blunder along ...
There were quite a few ... and, yes,
it was edgy which made it exciting
but the blowback had to be reconciled
with whomever was involved ...
or maybe not, I don't know ...
You mean the party of the first part? ...
Then, everyone was left with jottings
for memoirs, I suppose, following
what Paley calls *the open destiny of life* ...
The endgame ... the warning track ...
and you're about to hit the wall ...
Having a plot fenced you in, OK? ...
keyboarding your experiences ... or
assumptions ... or allegations on your laptop? ...
Indeed, you're not sure ...
Maybe retracing your steps
with a refurbished script ...
new words ... different words ...
that sort of thing ...

You ignore repetitions ... fractals ...
an infinity of repeats
and squeeze into a backbend ...
departures circling in a rattletrap
as if and only if the unloved
forgotten ... momentarily ...
surge to forgiveness ...
How many times will the times beckon
intimating *disposable*
without really thinking it through ...
not unlike Wittgenstein's
If a Lion could speak ...
The probabilities at the table
in the windowless room
plastered with Vermeers
sometimes go viral
when bad stuff happens
and people want to confirm their confusion
or mystify their position ...
Too precious ...
Choose small in big
and with that the elements of chance ...
Of course, you may lust ... out of desperation ...
watching skulls turn the stake
in an oil by Eakins ... and *You Are There*
with Walter Cronkite ... Sunday evenings
at seven ... always ...
Artifactuals like cluster fly innuendos ...
suitcases left open ...
Never again, yes? ...
You are adamant about hyperbolic clickbait
stretching late night moments
into roundabouts
with red double-decker buses
checking overdue promises that once held ...
And only now you worry the elements? ...
First paint a cage with an open door ...
Your books fester
raking words for combinations of letters ...
The UPS truck will see you now ...

Your dream in a dream,
shifting down, recalibrating ...
the shoulders seductive
their angularities mesmeric ...
Vendors arrive, and fishmongers ...
Wine glasses mingle ...
Bangles promise other worlds ...
And now you're crossing the street,
and she's asking ... something? ...
Sit down on this bench, please, take a break,
rewind the tape ...
Meanwhile, in the park, *The Life of Pi* ...
Your halter top loosens for a motorcycle working
through the gears of epistemology
as if the nothing in the epic
is worth mulling over ...
Generations of mimes have done this
for outpatients who in sultry moments
defer to traffic signals coded to lie ...
AI for all, yes? ...
Yeats appears in a side street black Subaru
to advance yardage
as specced in the last episode ...
perhaps *the* last episode as we wander
across the mind's moors singlehandedly
expecting closure ... but no one will be there ...
Can you imagine the anticipation
at this time of year when all by default
are bemoaning? ... Forget it,
the creek has embraced a perpetual shudder ...
The facades with their onomatopoeias
capturing moments on the fly
as is so often the wish ...
Understanding will arrive in a Cybertruck
as you remove your Uggs
to enter a marsh in search of the assignment ...
Yes, you're hoping an enhancement ...
And if it doesn't
you will still be able to scroll ...
You're trying too hard to make do with whatever

was brought to bear on the latest makeshift ...
Of course this will go down and then it won't ...
comparison shopping breeds confusion ...
you've seen evasions rippling through
as the shoals of vexation mutate
into a muddled equation ...
Impressionable temporaries, yes? ...
with moments of grammar drilling down
and then the main attraction appears as if ...
You would think not wouldn't you? ...
especially in those moments
when you're imagining a quartet of abstractions
posing as the four seasons
on the Outer Banks
while in this big rig
you are being strip-searched
by a string of tangled marionettes
who couldn't care less
about your precious autofictions ...
It's bending time, yes? ...
The smooth sailing before the plug is pulled
the plagiarized love notes
from odysseyites en route to the Gates of Hell ...
The voiceovers persist ...
a discordant feed to the rehearsal
when you're hit with that same old same old ...
You're talking rinky-dink geometries
for future listeners of *Symphony No. 7*
in A major ... Allegretto ...
endless drive-thrus of muted thoughts
while shuffling pages for reenactors
jotting embellishments
which one can only hope will carry the theme
to the next apotheosis in the score ...
Cutting the deck proves nothing ...
the cards jumping through the hoops of b-ball
for insomniacs boggling smartphone screens
rhapsodically nightmarish ...
You want to believe in running the changes
laid out in microtones

as if auditionees crowding the wings
for a chance to enter a reminiscence
will be given the go-ahead ...
You invent words in a secret garden
where you can walk and talk to yourself
without your mobile ...
You owe it to others to approach exultation ...
Can you lose the punctuation? ...
Can you ever be alone? ...
Open mics replace your words
to begin the game of on-and-on ...
Your hair will commence momentarily ...
this and that ... this and that ...
You're removing persons of interest
from the two-way mirror in your room ...
The decision is pretense ...
Several will chime in with ghost bubbles ...
The bath works wonders
but please be careful not to overdo it
especially when the plug is pulled ...
Your smartphone has gone radio silent
while interrogators make their way
along the *Street of Crocodiles*
with other reconfigured short stories
eager to disappoint ...
The disinterest unsettles ...
An iceberg moment, no doubt,
trying to savor the latest vintage
with concomitant misspellings ...
Your irresponsibility was sharp and gorgeous
with inconspicuous chords
that stayed the complexity of the moment
which you mentioned looked you in the eye
before settling elsewhere ...
Quite fascinating, yes? ...
This moment caught on tape
in the land of painful blisses ...
Bricks will merge with sand
leaving others sipping tea
while scrolling through terms of endearment

for ooohs and ahhs ...
It seems all the same ...
these striped ventures
loaded with guilty pleasures
seducing implants with aromatic codes
written late at night by amanuenses on leave ...
Your medieval wall hangings talk the talk
for fact-checkers ... opportunists
firing up fire pits ... preachy-like ...
If it comes off ... and well, I mean,
when was the last time that dropped? ...
not unlike the whiteout
that made driving crazy
for tagalongs from other times, other worlds ...
You found magic in the lower forty
asking directions
which prompted questions
from passersby rubbernecking in disbelief ...
You doubled in spiked heels with a wooden
Louisville Slugger followed by a double header
for oglers-in-training ... the gearbox
of your Suzuki mimicking the Uggs
you carried in your backpack
for occasional rock-a-days
shredding dirt bikes under the Passaic Falls
as bewildered as pointers in a perfumery
their words baseball trading cards
holding tickets
to a Saturday *Creature Double Feature*
rarely searching for lost time
as memorialized by a closeted deadhead
scalping instructions
for *Around the World with a Yo-yo* ...
The passing of notes in your cube
trialed the lifespan of Bics, scribbling spam
for residents of Williams's *Ghost Town*
awestruck by the pediatrician's
It's all in the ear ...
You journeyed elsewhere with a Moleskine notebook
capturing comments from the fringe ...

your never-ending tour
rivaling Rimbaud's *Illuminations* ...
There were moments
when it seemed to all come together
but those were dreamscapes from a *Five & Dime*
that shipped closeouts to dugouts
when security was busy resetting cameras
while superimposing fairytale footage
for power trippers ...
It turned out to be the luck of the draw ...
The day seethes with algorithms ...
its own if's ands but
its own talk-talk about all this ...
the reprehensible coding
the need to fill in the blanks
the how-tos surfacing then receding
the aura pulsating with an indifference
as if grasping at the straws of forgiveness ...
It's not so much the illusion of indiscretions
colored for the moment
but something else, something ill-conceived ...
Not the first time, yes? ...
No, not the first time ...
Dismayed by the lines
yet afraid of getting caught ...
Getting caught? ...
Yes, getting caught in a lie ...
Not sold on that idea, at least for now ...
Blaming yourself ... hating yourself
you begin thinking
there must be a better way
mired as you are in autofiction ...
Think about the medieval craftsmen
whose meticulousness is evident
even in the most hidden places
of church pews ...
As if traversing Wordle's words
on a walking pad
through a supermarket's aisles of innuendoes
all life long ... all life long ...

An ancient pipe organ with meantone tuning
insinuates
all stops pulled
encrypted with comforter
and mug of Kuchika tea ...
a passing fancy seeps into the day
drifting into the free-floating white ...
The fray awaits your arrival ...
The Late Middle Ages? ...
The revamp? ...
Why now? ...
The shakedown ... a faded fiction ... explanatory ...
The opening scene ... muted, yes? ...
The Director's cut ... a fashionista's foreplay ...
with outtakes no less
to make do with the trancelike snow ...
Indeed, the polyphony suits ...
Troubling yourself over the chronology of events ...
But why the embellishments? ...
OK, so the use of fourth-wall-pulverizing techniques
currently in vogue ... bare bones judged idiomatically,
as announced, by the watchers at the gate ...
the mortuary silence of winter ...
But this cesspool of a script squeezed through, yes? ...
You know it ... we all know it ...
Deer don't seem to mind the snow much
since their hair is hollow and a very good insulator ...
But your words, camouflaged, are spindly ...
prone to slippage ... not unlike Mallarmé
holding a cigar in his hand
for Manet's portrait of him ...
Doubtless, a subtlety in Microsoft's latest release
with the clickety-clack on the trestle
of the train with its nightmarish boxcars ...
Of course, the focalization or fragmentation
in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* ... words bobbing along
eager to terminate your membership ...
The fray resumes the fray
inundated with submissions for redactions ...
It reminds you of everything

as if honing in on DNA
will unveil yet another double helix
in your backstory ...
At the feeders, black-capped chickadees,
whited-out, remain untroubled ...
Autodidacts pay homage to autofictions
slanted autofictions
redacted autofictions
dripping in time to the musical notes
of someone else's autofiction ...
The wizard ... the wonderful wizard
spurns happenstance with remorse ...
his almost comic anti-otherness
from the burnished depths
of his life as an accomplice
unfolds with complicity ...
Missing persons clutter mental walk-ups
trying to insinuate themselves back
into your script, while Them-That-Got
agree to convene a solution
but there is no solution ...
Excerpting obituaries might yield a clue
to the ornamentation favored by those
who think they're in the know ...
The dry illumination will not help
despite what you've heard ...
Sadly, they are no wiser for it ...
You want to cut short the conversation? ...
That could compromise the data
you've agreed to share ... but I suppose
that happens more than we'd like to admit ...
Falling as it does into the infinitesimal hole
in our consciousness, to plummet headlong
into the twenty-thousand leagues of notes ...
A Captain Nemo type was found floating along
in an alphabetical undercurrent ...
This has to be yet another wake-up call ...
And now they've returned to their respective lives ...
The dry brush technique
may save the canvas and open a door

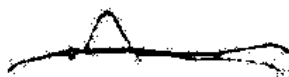
to a more genial interpretation of events ...
Over and over again, the enchantment
brought everyone together ...
You worry the bluntness of your new bob
but those arguments are insinuations
foreshadowing a sequence of ups and downs ...
And what about the yellow tux? ...
Such a shame to have jettisoned the BLT ...
Was it part of your weight-loss mantra? ...
I think your proportions marvel exactitude
of whatever was implied by that intrusive handle ...
Forewarned, you stopped just short
of the nomenclature waiting in the siding
for the perplexed locomotive
to accept the consolation prize ...
Take it, yes, take it ...
Now you're back in front of the class
with your trigonometric underpinnings
which have a history of wowing counterinsurgents
on leave in the high peaks
managing silence with admirable refrain ...
Yet another cardboard castle nestled in the wood ...
Despite the after-hours rehearsals
there was never an overnight
just a quick wherewithal
and you were out ... and about ...
The flesh overrated, yes? ...
And with that a different costume
supporting an expression of calm ...
Surreal of calm, perhaps? ...
No hint of disbelief ... nope ...
good, I suppose if you're determined
to argue a rewrite ...
At least that's what was intimated ...
You spent the morning scrubbing histories
of suburban notifications
which seemed to have popped up
overnight in network logs ...
AI spillage and then again what was it? ...
You could have queried the odysseyites

who were eager to feather their maps with minutiae
spellbinding summit seekers ...
You unfriended a chat by recounting the experience
of closing various gaps awash with celebratory shifts
to the astonishment of those in the antechamber
queuing up for the virtual red carpet ...
So Double-Double-Toil-and-Stubble
takes the stage to assure the Academy
that he won't be egregious
acknowledging with record-setting windbaggy
that it can all go away ...
His chewing gum thrown into a bath
of lemon and eucalyptus catalysts
begs a raging crisp outlined situation room ...
uprooting doomed lovers
slumpingly caressing each scene
at the ruins of Ramesses II ...
The red carpet frayed ...
Acceptance speeches vaporized ...
You too seem unsure of your lines
which regrettably is not all that uncommon
in these days of AI scripting
with writers and editors and influencers
tripping over one another
to comply with those signing their per diems ...
The future catwalks an ultramarine puffer jacket ...
Fast forward to destabilization
adjusting the required rhymes apart from the action ...
You have immersed yourself in totemism ...
Copies of postproduction notes
have been distributed to those on the brink ...
So it's back to the basics, I suppose ...
In no time, ashes ... at the wellhead of a dream ...
You don't want to call, trust me ...
Confiding to a few intimates
will stem the tide of what, I'm not sure anymore ...
Once captivating, now drudgery ...
There are far too many shifts in this faux drama
meandering across the busy boulevard
dotted with coding samples from the latest release ...

Take the funny and run, yes? ...
You're binging a miniseries about reincarnates
trapped in the blunt pretense of chance
not unlike those you've encountered
on your daily walk along the canal ...
Connoisseurs of oblivion have at it
in brittle best sellers ... patched together
with stepwise amplification ...
You awoke to a bath in the middle of the night
which put to rest your restless legs
and opened a door to an urge
to sit for a portrait by the medievalist
who hawks indulgences in the virtual piazza
two towns over ...
Afternoons with straw figures
cavorting in delightful emptiness
in a surreal haven
with the unseasonable obtuse ...
Where does your property begin again? ...
Where do you begin again? ...
At the spring? ...
With the barn and its many matrices? ...
Inasmuch as differences
clip the wings of understanding for some
you are welcome to settle in ...
Tea? ... a book, perhaps? ...
Feel free to chill
before the requisite summing-up
propels messengers of redaction
back out onto the backroads of many ...
No less marginal than a cover
of *Strawberry Fields Forever* ...
You with a fortnight
of multiple choice questions
sticker shock
collapsing into pasteboard invitations ...
the weather again unsure
of what to do ...
The unsavory coupling, yes, that too,
meeting in dreamscapes ...

inquisitive ...
Drumming a little life into the countryside ...
Seads of to-dos ... little matter ...
There was a moment when you were sure
it would all come together
but it didn't ... and you were OK with that ...
comfortable with the unknown
en plain air ... right down the middle
a come as you are kind of invite
especially now
with endgamers threatening tell-alls ...
Deconstructing scripts in a restorative way
through Four-Star George's
glass, and darkly
the age-long strife I see ...
proofs unfolding ...
patterns and colorways of labyrinths
seductive equations
stepwise progressions with benefits ...
Your grandmother's to-do, I suppose? ...
A better way to open, maybe? ...
I am become ... whatever ...
The answer? ... *Blowin' in the wind?* ...
Counters zeroed-out
I Am Curious (Yellow) ... and in walks *Myth of Man*
an odyssey for your disbelief ... suspended as it is ...
You hold the magic to an alternate reality
engaging passersby
with the opening lines to *The Odyssey*:
Tell me about a complicated man ...
how he wandered and was lost ...
And so the drama:
the camera, hand-held, tightens the frame
the fuzziness dissolves
at the edge of a beach softened by watercolor
soundtracked with trance ...
Do you mean, nothing with nothing? ...
No, surreptitiously ... re-entering silence
as an arm enters a sleeve ...
Insisting on ... what? ... endless endings? ...

The mute mouth to the deaf ear...
the camera panning the crowd...
Perhaps in time
you will chance the lives you've imagined
trying on a different metaphor
to become who you are by not knowing...
But it wasn't *everything always*
the lines more different than alike
appropriated from Greek tragedies
by skeletons awaiting the call...
There are others in the wings...
There will *always* be others in the wings
finessing their choreography
with alphabetical certitude...
Outswimming your self with devil-may-care strokes
you push identity-theft to boggle the minds
of scaredy cats and leaf-rustlers
with grayed-out options...
Everything... and more...
within reach... in theory...
The slapdown bulks-up beyond the mirror-image...
You think it odd?...
Life out of balance...
The moment to moment is not the same...
The words... not the same...



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